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ABSTRACT

Previous studies conclude that the assassination attempt on George C. Wallace was a news event of high, but not maximum, importance, implying that the majority of respondents in any sample would report first learning of the attack via mass media sources. The authors interviewed 144 persons in Ann Arbor, Michigan, regarding their awareness of the precipitating news item. The original hypothesis was proved invalid. The findings of Hovland and Weiss, that untrustworthy sources bearing counter-informational tidings are most easily forgotten, were tested in a second survey, to determine whether this "sleeper effect" mechanism accounted for the differential rates of "reported media first hearing of certain news events." Data obtained by the authors were compared with and contrasted to earlier findings by other investigators. (EE)

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THE GEORGE WALLACE SHOOTING: NEWS DIFFUSION AND THE SLEEPER EFFECT

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On May 15, 1972, shortly after 3 PM EST,[1] George Corley Wallace was shot. As news of the attempted assassination was aired and repeated our attention focused on its diffusion. We were concerned with what the diffusion process would look like across certain demographic variables and what attitudinal responses to the shooting would be.

Studies of the diffusion of news of assassinations have been conducted before. Greenberg[2] reported that over 50 per cent of his San Jose sample were informed of the assassination of President Kennedy through interpersonal channels. Spitzer and Spitzer[3], in a door-to-door study of news of the Kennedy assassination in Iowa City, Iowa, also reported interpersonal sources to be the single most used channel for initial information of the event (55 per cent) with radio accounting for 25 per cent of first awareness and television another 19 per cent. Hill and Bonjean,[4] in a study based on a random, multi-stage sample of 212 Dallas residents conducted one week after Kennedy was shot, found the speed of the diffusion process to be a function of the "news value" of the event rather than particular characteristics of the population under investigation. Interpersonal communication was the most important source of initial learning of the assassination (57 per cent vs. 43 per cent mass media), and the authors concluded that "interpersonal communication becomes the most important single source for news stories of

extraordinary significance."

In contrast, Mendelsohn,[5] in data gathered from a "stratified sample of 200 teen-agers and adults in the state of Colorado in early winter, 1963," found mass media to be the combined primary source of information (56 per cent) about the Kennedy assassination (radio=39 per cent, TV=17 per cent) and interpersonal communication to be first source of information for 32 per cent of his respondents (12 per cent "could not recall, gave no answer, or gave various sources combined"). Moreover, Levy,[6] employing Polarized Subgroup Analysis on a nationwide sample of 1200 adults obtained from 100 sampling points, found that the mass media were the most important first source of information about the assassinations of six political figures in the United States during the 1960's, and nearly 70 per cent of his respondents reported hearing about each assassination from mass media sources. Greenberg,[7] in a study of eighteen news events, including the first Kennedy assassination, hypothesized that "Person to person communication as the first source of news has its primary role in the diffusion of events which receive maximum or minimum attention from the populous." He found that for events "attended to by nearly everyone or nearly no one...10 per cent with any knowledge of an event first learned from others." With events of near crisis proportions the importance of interpersonal channels was found to be as high as 50 per cent.

A review of the findings of these studies led us to the following expectation concerning the first source of news for those who had heard of the Wallace shooting. Since Wallace was not President, and since the attack was not the first in the era, the shooting of George Wallace would seem

to be a news event of high, but not maximum importance. Thus, we expected that the majority of respondents in our sample who knew of the event would report first learning of the Wallace shooting via mass media sources.

METHOD: Study I

Subjects and Procedure

The sample consisted of interviews with 144 persons in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Respondents were selected on the basis of proximity to the University of Michigan campus and the necessity to interview people as close in time to the shooting as possible (Ss were contacted 1 to 6 hours after the event).

The authors and two additional graduate students conducted the interviews. In the typical interview the interviewer asked questions concerning subjects' awareness of "a major news item" that day (without mentioning the event itself), "George Wallace" in particular (if no response to the first question was offered), and subjects' "reaction to the shooting" (if they did not know of the event they were informed by the interviewer and then asked to comment).[8] If the respondent reported knowing that Wallace had been shot, several additional questions were asked, most importantly: "How did you first hear about the shooting?" Finally, demographic characteristics were recorded.

The intent of the timing of the survey and the questions of the questionnaire was to obtain data of the form "What *is* your reaction?" in so far as possible, rather than asking persons to attempt an imperfectly reconstructed response to questions of the form "What *was* your reaction as you recall it?" Similarly, the time of the interview was noted, together with data concerning the awareness of the respondent to the shooting, but subjects were not asked to recall the specific

time they had heard of the event.

FINDINGS: Study I

Demographic Characteristics

Persons interviewed were classified on the basis of race, sex, occupation, political affiliation, and presidential preference. Nearly all of the respondents were white (92 per cent), with black persons comprising the remaining 8 per cent. Fortuitously, half of the sample were males and half were females. University students comprised 46 per cent of the sample, 41 per cent were employed non-students, and 13 per cent were housewives, retirees, and persons unemployed. Politically, 69 per cent of the sample considered themselves left, 14 per cent said they were moderates, 8 per cent placed themselves to the right of the political spectrum, and 9 per cent were not classified (refused to answer question, apolitical, etc.). Of the 75 respondents who volunteered their preference for president, more than three-fourths favored McGovern, 7 per cent favored Nixon, and the other 17 per cent voiced support for other specific candidates (e.g. 7 per cent favored Wallace). In terms of state primary returns and national election results, this sample obviously is not politically representative of either Michigan residents in general or the population of this country. However, these results conform fairly closely with election returns Washtenaw County obtained in the Michigan primary the day after Wallace was shot and the day after this survey was conducted.

Diffusion

The principal concerns of this study were an investigation of diffusion of news of the Wallace shooting and learning the reactions of persons to the event. With regard to the diffusion process, 79 per cent of the sample had heard

of the event at the time they were contacted and 19 per cent had not heard. The remaining respondents (2 per cent) had heard something about Wallace that seemed unusual to them, but they were not aware of the specific event.

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TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

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The diffusion results are summarized in Table 1. The shooting occurred shortly after 3 P.M. EST, and the first news reports were broadcast at about 3:15 P.M. EST. Our first interviews were conducted between 4 P.M. and 4:30 P.M. The time of interview for our last unaware respondent was 8 P.M. and interviewing was stopped at 9:30 P.M.

The most obvious features of the data are the increase of percentage aware which occurred about 5:00 P.M., when most of the workers and students in our sample were returning home for the day, and the high level of awareness of the shooting in the early interviews (71 per cent). A negative diffusion trend (the drop from 88 per cent to 85 per cent in the half-hours before and after 5:30 P.M.), as discussed by Funkhouser and McCombs[9] may have occurred in the early evening hours. The time of interview data does not lend itself well to an analysis of type of source by time as time increases, since time of interview is decreasingly correlated with time of hearing as time passes, except for those who have not heard. For interviews shortly after the event, however, this data may be informative. The source of first hearing by time of interview for those aware is also summarized in Table 1. The dependence on radio over television for those who first heard via a media source was maintained over time of interviews.

Newspapers played no role in the diffusion process for this sample.

Perhaps the most important finding, however, is the first source of information of the event for our respondents. In contrast to our prediction that the majority of our sample would hear of the event from mass media sources, of the 79 per cent of the total sample who were aware of the shooting (114 people), only 30 per cent reported hearing of the shooting via the mass media while 70 per cent of these respondents said they heard from interpersonal sources. Specifically, 21 per cent heard via radio, 9 per cent via television, 64 per cent via face to face communication, and 6 per cent via telephone. The 64 per cent face to face transmission of information came from strangers (24 per cent), co-workers (24 per cent), friends (13 per cent), and relatives (3 per cent). Thus, approximately one-quarter of those in the sample who were aware of the Wallace shooting heard the news via face to face communication with a person they had not seen before. Finally, as with the Hill and Bonjean study, males were more likely to be aware of the event than females (90 per cent vs. 70 per cent). Males were also more likely to hear from radio and females from television for those who heard via the media; these findings are also consistent with the Mendolsohn and the Hill and Bonjean investigations.

The reported behavior of 46 per cent of our sample was to stay tuned to radio or television if they were listening, or to turn to a media source if they were not already listening. Another 19 per cent did nothing, 1 per cent actually turned the media off, and 55 per cent told someone, called someone, or otherwise engaged in some form of interpersonal communication concerning the shooting. The overlap is due to the multiple action (media and interpersonal) taken by 21 per cent of the sample. There were no apparent differences between persons

hearing via mass media or via interpersonal sources in seeking out other persons to discuss the event, or in being sought out for information about the shooting. About one-half of the respondents hearing each way actually sought out at least one other person to tell of the event. Similarly, there are no major differences in the number or the kind of sources that those respondents hearing via mass media or interpersonal sources sought out for more information.

About one out of every five persons interviewed was unaware of the shooting. The demographic characteristics and political preferences for those unaware were not substantially different from the sample as a whole. The only unusual characteristics of the unaware group were (a) that 75 per cent of those unaware of the event were women (recall that one-half of the sample were women), and (b) that no person calling himself a radical or anarchist (there were 17 in the sample) was unaware when interviewed.

Attitudinal Reactions

Respondents' attitudes toward the shooting were diverse; thirty different categories were necessary to accurately record the responses obtained. Reactions ranged from shock and horror through surprise and disbelief to reactions of happiness and joy. While Feshbach and Feshbach[10] reported that 91 per cent of their sample of 379 persons in Boulder, Colorado, claimed to be shocked at the assassination of President Kennedy and 62 per cent extremely upset, not even one-fifth of our sample had the same initial reaction (shock), and only 7 per cent of the respondents specifically said they were upset. Other frequent responses included disbelief (4 per cent), terrible (7 per cent), disgust (4 per cent), sorrow (3 per cent), surprise (7 per cent), joy (7 per cent) and comments about the sickness in society or the stupidity of the specific act.

Dividing these responses into three categories of negative reactions to the act (typified by a response of anger, shock, horror, shameful, etc.); generally neutral (responses of disbelief, neutral, no comment, not surprised, surprised, etc.); and definitely favorable feelings about the shooting (only responses of glad, happy, joy, it's probably for the best, and too bad he's not dead), yields 62 per cent against the shooting, 28 per cent neutral, and 10 per cent with positive feelings about the event. Reactions which might be classified as either favorable or neutral, depending on point of view (e.g. "At least it's not one of ours.") were classified as neutral. Hence, the figure of 10 per cent of our respondents favoring the shooting of George Wallace is conservative, a contrast with Greenstein's[11] finding that there were no responses indicating a favorable attitude toward the assassination of John Kennedy among students sampled at Weslyan University.

DISCUSSION: Study I

The extent and rate of diffusion in this study was not as great as in Greenberg's report that 79 per cent of his sample knew of the JFK shooting during the first 45 minutes, or in Spitzer's and Spitzer's statement that 91 per cent of their sample knew of the JFK shooting within one hour. However, unlike the JFK shooting, which was the first of its kind in many years, involved a President rather than presidential candidate, and became the "single focus of all channels of communication" according to Greenberg, the news of the Wallace shooting took the form of periodic bulletins and regularly scheduled television and radio newscasts, and was therefore forced to compete with other messages on the same mass media channels. Another reason for this somewhat slower diffusion rate, despite the similarity of the news, may be

the fact that people who tend to be at home all day, (i.e., housewives, retired people and persons unemployed) who have more access to the media, comprised a relatively small percentage of our sample (13 per cent).

Unlike diffusion studies of the Kennedy assassination in which media first hearers and interpersonal knowers tended to be about evenly split, and Levy's study which found about 70 per cent of his sample listing the media as a first source, only 30 per cent of the respondents in our sample who were aware of the shooting heard of the event directly from the mass media. Thus, our expectation that the majority of our sample would have heard directly via the media proved to be incorrect. We thought of two possible reasons for this reversal. First, our sample may have been different from those used in other studies. Seventy-nine per cent of the workers and students in our sample heard from interpersonal sources and eighty-seven per cent of the respondents were students or workers. Thus, we may have interviewed people who tended to be away from home when the event occurred and an interpersonal first source may be more likely for these people. To some extent we believe that this did happen.

But a second explanation also seemed plausible. We interviewed our subjects between 45 minutes and 6 hours and 15 minutes after the first news broadcast of the event. We found 30 per cent media-first-hearers. Spitzer and Spitzer collected their data between 3.5 and 10 hours after the event and found 44 per cent media-first-hearers. Greenberg interviewed from seven to ten days after the event and found 50 per cent media-first-hearers. Levy interviewed one to six years after the event and found 70 per cent media-first-hearers. The trend of these four studies is pronounced: the percentage of media-first-hearers increases with time of interview for "maximum importance" news events.[12]

Levy mentions the possibility that respondents might be more likely to report hearing of an event via mass sources after the passage of time than they would if questioned closer in time to their hearing of the event, but discounts it in his study. He reasons that since his respondents reported informal sources to be less important and newspapers more important for the less well known assassinations, the memories of his subjects must be reasonably accurate. Levy ascribes the differences across studies to a difference in samples. While not questioning the difference in samples, we do question the accuracy of human memory over time. Hovland and Weiss,[13] commenting on the sleeper effect in source credibility, state that "With the passage of time...they may remember and accept <u>what</u> was communicated but not <u>who</u> communicated it." Hovland and Weiss found this effect to be most pronounced for untrustworthy sources who stated a position not initially held by the receiver. The sources involved in the present study are all first sources. Thus, they all stated a position not initially held by the receiver (the news of the assassination). Were the sources trustworthy? One out of every four respondents in our study who was aware of the shooting heard the news from a person he had never seen before. These strangers would seem to fit the category of untrustworthy sources who stated a counter-informational position. We may ask, how many people hear of an event such as an assassination from a source they do not believe and later remember the information but forget the initial source? If, on the other hand, the media is the first source, this effect should be less pronounced since the message should be more believable than when it comes from an interpersonal source, and the media are often turned to for information about news events.

In short, people may not remember how they first heard of an event, and may not believe the source of this information when the source is interpersonal, even when questioned immediately after the event. If the Hovland and Weiss findings are correct, that untrustworthy sources bearing counter-informational tidings are most easily forgotten, then we have presented a mechanism which might explain the differential rates of reported media first hearing of certain news events.

METHOD: Study II

To test whether this mechanism actually occurs in studies of news diffusion, a second survey was conducted exactly three months after the original assassination attempt in May (August 7, 1972). It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference ($p < .05$) between rate of media and interpersonal first sources of news of the Wallace shooting reported by persons in similar samples obtained three months apart. More specifically, it was predicted that for the second sample there would be a significant increase in reports of media as the initial source of information of the event and a significant decrease in the number of persons reporting initial awareness via interpersonal sources. In order that the sample might closely approximate the earlier one, we canvassed the same residential area (while being careful to avoid blocks sampled in the first survey), and, for the sake of comparison, classified subjects on the same demographic basis previously employed. One hundred sixty four people were interviewed on the same day of the week and at the same time (4:00 P.M.-9:30 P.M.) as in the first study. A summary of the demographic characteristics of Sample II and a comparison with those of Sample I is presented in Table 2.

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TABLE TWO ABOUT HERE

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Once again, nearly all of the respondents were white (95 per cent), and approximately half were male (45 per cent) and half female (55 per cent). The sample was comprised of 41 per cent students, 41 per cent employed non-students, and 18 per cent were unemployed. Forty-nine per cent of the sample considered themselves to be left of center politically, 30 per cent said they were moderate, 13 per cent were right, and the others could not be classified (no response, apolitical, etc.). With respect to the then upcoming Presidential election, 77 per cent said they intended to vote for McGovern and 15 per cent supported Nixon, while the remainder favored some other candidate.[14] The comparison of the demographic characteristics of the two samples suggests that they are highly similar.

Persons in this sample were asked to respond to several questions, most importantly: (1) "Can you tell me how you first heard of the shooting of George Wallace?", and (2) What was your initial reaction to the shooting?"

FINDINGS: Study II

In the area of attitudinal reactions, initial reactions to the shooting continued to be characterized by a diversity of responses. A total of 33 different response categories were recorded ranging from horror to "too bad he's not dead." A consolidation of these categories into negative feeling about the shooting, neutral, and positive expressions toward the act yielded 57 per cent against, 33 per cent neutral, and 10 per cent in favor of the shooting. Table 3 compares the respondents attitudes to the shooting across the two samples. There is a slight shift toward neutrality from those originally opposed toward the shooting, but the difference is not significant. The percentage of persons who were in favor of the shooting was the same for both samples.

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TABLE THREE ABOUT HERE

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With regard to the initial source of information, of those who replied how they had first heard of the shooting ninety days earlier (N=158), 57 per cent cited the media as their first source of awareness, with 28 per cent citing television, 25 per cent citing radio, and 4 per cent newspapers. Forty-three per cent mentioned interpersonal communication as their first source of awareness, with 20 per cent citing friends, 10 per cent co-workers, 8 per cent strangers, 4 per cent relatives, and 1 per cent phone conversations. Table 4 compares the two surveys for respondents' initial source of information about the shooting. As anticipated, the percentage of persons citing media-first-sources increased significantly (57 per cent vs. 30 per cent originally). Correspondingly, those citing interpersonal sources as first sources of information decreased (43 per cent vs. 70 per cent in Sample 1). These differences were significant; $p < .001$.

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TABLE FOUR ABOUT HERE

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If the dissociation effect is at work in the second sample we would expect at least two particular indicators to be pronounced in the second survey. First, the number of persons indicating strangers as first sources of information should decrease for persons who reported knowledge of the shooting. This result was obtained; while 24 per cent of those in Sample I who knew of the event reported learning from strangers, only 8 per cent in the second sample reported strangers as an initial source of information. It is possible

that such persons in the second sample, as with the group in the Hovland and Weiss study exposed to untrustworthy sources, were not associating source and message. This possibility seems more reasonable when a comparison is made for sources of first information by occupation, the second indicator. We would expect the percentage of persons in each group reporting hearing via media to increase significantly between samples since persons in these groups initially hearing from other persons may have forgotten that source (stranger, co-worker, friend, etc.) over time and may confuse having seen or heard the event on the media later that afternoon or evening as the initial source of information (particularly if the individual usually relies on media for his information). Table 5 compares the first source of information by respondents' occupation for each sample. As anticipated, the overall rate of media awareness for Sample II workers and students in particular (persons likely to have been in school or at work when Wallace was shot) increased sharply from a combined 24 per cent mass media-first awareness rate in Sample I to 44 per cent in Sample II, while interpersonal first sources dropped from 64 per cent to 39 per cent for persons of these two groups across samples.

TABLE FIVE ABOUT HERE

A more sensitive view of the differences across samples between interpersonal first sources and media-first

hearers is provided in Table 6, a comparison of initial sources of information about the shooting within occupational groups. Twelve per cent of the student respondents in Sample I heard via media while 49 per cent of the students in the second survey reported media-first-awareness. This was a significant increase in the number of media knowers ($p < .001$), an increase coupled with a corresponding decrease in the percentage of students reporting interpersonal first sources. Similarly, there was a significant increase ($p < .01$) in the number of media awareness replies within the employed non-student group between samples (expressed in percentage as 32 per cent in May versus 55 per cent in August), and a concomitant drop in the percentage of interpersonal first sources reported in Sample II. Finally, we see the same effect present in the unemployed group, with a significant decrease in percentage of interpersonal first sources being accompanied by a significant increase in the number of media knowers as well as a large increase in percentage of unemployed media-first-hearers in the second sample. The marked increases in media awareness, in terms of number of responses and percentages within groups, and the decreases in percentage of persons reporting interpersonal sources as their initial sources of information about the Wallace shooting seem to indicate the dissociation of source and message content in the memory of our respondents.

TABLE SIX ABOUT HERE

CONCLUSION

The significant differences between rate of media and interpersonal first awareness of the same event reported by persons in similar samples and within the same occupational groups obtained three months apart suggest that a separation of message and source occurred over time. Persons interviewed in the second sample remembered the event, but frequently those who reported hearing it via mass media exhibited some uncertainty in their responses. The tendency to separate original source from message may be attributable to the higher credibility of the media, repeated airing of the event, and a general tendency to both seek and receive information about news events from the media. That previous diffusion research has often been undertaken substantially after the occurrence of the event may account for the largely undetected interpersonal flow of information. Further, it seems likely that the greater the amount of time between the occurrence of a newsworthy event and the interview about that event, the greater the impact of the dissociation effect on the results of the study. Future studies of news diffusion patterns need to take into account this effect by interviewing very close in time to the spread of news about the event if they seek valid measurement of the extent to which interpersonal communication operates in the news diffusion process.

TABLE 1

Diffusion and Source of Awareness
by Time of Interview: Sample I

Time of Interview	Percentage Aware and Base of Percentage	Percentage of Those Aware Who Heard from Media and Base of Percentage
4:00-4:30	71% (38)	40% (27)
4:30-5:00	72 (39)	43 (28)
5:00-5:30	88 (25)	37 (22)
5:30-6:00	85 (20)	21 (17)
7:00-9:30	91 (22)	11 (20)
Total Sample	79% (144)	30% (114)

TABLE 2

A Comparison of Demographic Characteristics and Political Preferences of the Survey Samples

Characteristic	Sample I Day of Wallace Shooting Percentage	N	Sample II Three Months Later Percentage	N
Race				
White	92%		95%	
Black	8		3	
Other			2	
	100% =	139	100% =	164
Sex				
Male	50%		45%	
Female	50		55	
	100% =	140	100% =	164
Occupation				
Student	46%		41%	
Employed Non-student	41		41	
Unemployed	13		18	
	100% =	116	100% =	164
Political Preference				
Left	69%		49%	
Moderate	14		30	
Right	8		13	
Other	9		8	
	100% =	131	100% =	164
Presidential Preference				
McGovern	76%		77%	
Nixon	7		15	
Other	17		8	
	100% =	75	100% =	130

TABLE 3

A Comparison of Attitudinal Reactions
to the Wallace Shooting

	Sample I Day of Wallace Shooting		Sample II Three Months Later	
Reaction to Shooting	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
Negative	62%		57%	
Neutral	28		33	
Positive	10		10	
	100% =	134	100% =	163

TABLE 4

A Comparison of Initial Source of Information of News of the Wallace Shooting for Respondents in Survey Samples

Source of Information	Sample I Day of Wallace Shooting Percentage	N (114)		Sample II Three Months Later Percentage	N (158)
Mass Media					
Television	21%			28%	
Radio	9			25	
Newspaper	0			4	
	30% =	34		57% =	90
Interpersonal					
Phone	6%			1%	
Stranger	24			8	
Relative	3			4	
Friend	13			10	
Co-worker	24			20	
	70% =	80	< *	43% =	68

*Probability <.001, Chi-Square

TABLE 5

A Comparison of Initial Source of Information
by Occupation of Respondents
in the Survey Samples

Occupation	Source	Sample I Day of Wallace Shooting	Sample II Three Months Later
Students	Media	10%	21%
	Interpersonal	34	21
Employed non-students	Media	14	23
	Interpersonal	29	18
Unemployed	Media	8	13
	Interpersonal	5	4
		100%	100%

TABLE 6

A Comparison of Initial Source of Information
Within Occupational Groups in
the Survey Samples

Occupation	Source	Sample I[a] Per cent	Sample I[a] N		Sample II Per cent	Sample II N
Students						
	Media	12%	(9)	<**	49%	(32)
	Interpersonal	78	(32)		51	(33)
		100	(41)		100	(65)
Employed non-students						
	Media	32%	(13)	<*	55%	(36)
	Interpersonal	68	(28)		45	(29)
		100	(41)		100	(65)
Unemployed						
	Media	58%	(7)	<**	82%	(23)
	Interpersonal	42	(5)		18	(5)
		100	(12)		100	(28)

[a]These figures are based on persons for whom we have occupational data and who knew of the event.

*$p < .01$, Chi-Square

**$p < .001$, Chi-Square

NOTES

[1]EST is used for all times reported in this study since it is the local time when the interviews were conducted.

[2]Bradley S. Greenberg, "Diffusion of News of the Kennedy Assassination," Public Opinion Quarterly, 28 (1964), 225-232. Also in Bradley S. Greenberg and Edwin B. Parker, The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1965), pp. 89-98.

[3]Stephen P. Spitzer and Nancy S. Spitzer, "Diffusion of News of the Kennedy and Oswald Deaths," in Greenberg and Parker, op. cit., pp. 99-111.

[4]Richard J. Hill and Charles M. Bonjean, "News Diffusion: A Test of the Regularity Hypothesis," Journalism Quarterly (Summer, 1964), 337-342.

[5]Harold Mendelsohn, "Broadcast vs. Personal Sources of Information in Emergent Public Crises: The Presidential Assassination," Journal of Broadcasting, 8 (Spring, 1964), 147-156.

[6]Sheldon G. Levy, "How Population Subgroups Differed in Knowledge of Six Assassinations," Journalism Quarterly, 46 (1969), 685-698.

[7]Bradley S. Greenberg, "Person to Person Communication in the Diffusion of News Events," Journalism Quarterly, 41 (1964), 489-494.

[8]Respondents informed of the shooting by interviewers were not included in the proportion of persons first hearing from an interpersonal source.

[9]G. Ray Funkhouser and Maxwell E. McCombs, "The Rise and Fall of News Diffusion," Public Opinion Quarterly, 35 (1971), 107-115.

[10]Norma Feshbach and Seymour Feshbach, "Personality and Political Values: A Study of Reactions to Two Accused Assassins," in Greenberg and Parker, op. cit., pp. 289-304.

[11]Fred I. Greenstein, "College Students' Reactions to the Assassination of John F. Kennedy," in Greenberg and Parker, op. cit., pp. 289-304.

[12]While there are many published studies of news diffusion, we have selected four studies of similar events: political shootings. Studies which do not fit into this pattern generally do not deal with the same type of news. For example, Deutschman and Danielson interviewed between one and two days after the events they studied and found an average of 88 percent of aware subjects had heard via the media. But their study, like most studies which found very low rates of interpersonal communication as a first source, falls into the category of middle interest news stories which Greenberg has shown will not be relayed by word of mouth. If interest level of the news story is controlled, the trend is toward an increase in the percentage of media-first-hearers with an increase in time between event and interview.

[13]Carl I. Hovland and Walter Weiss, "The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness," Public Opinion Quarterly, 15 (1951), 635-650.

[14]These percentages are based on respondents who expressed preference for a particular candidate.